

a loved one should be. These scars need to be acknowledged and hopefully healed.

The death toll from COVID-19 is even more wrenching. At least 112,000 Americans—whether in the hospital, the nursing home, or at home—have met the end of their lives without the comfort of their family, friends, or loved ones. Yesterday, more than 700 Americans died from this disease, and many were forced to close their eyes without the support of their loved ones nearby.

In my home state of Indiana, we have lost at least 12,966 Hoosiers to COVID-19 at nursing homes. We also know that African Americans are dying at disproportionate rates from COVID-19. African Americans in Indiana. Institutional racism, compounded by environmental and economic injustices, have made COVID-19 particularly devastating for African Americans. My heart grieves for my fellow Americans who took their last breath, because of this terrible disease, without the loving comfort and support they deserved.

For the family, friends, and loved ones of those who died from COVID-19, the isolation and loneliness brought by this disease only grows after their loved one's passing. Social distancing and the isolating fear of this disease prevent us from adequately honoring and memorializing the many victims of COVID-19. Large memorial services are not possible. Family gatherings to celebrate lost loved ones are curtailed, with supportive hugs replaced by six feet of distance and protective masks. Private funeral services—if not cancelled or postponed altogether—have often had to take place with only 10 people or less.

In addition to its sickness, death, and disruption, COVID-19 has robbed us of traditional ways of honoring our lost loved ones. Holding smaller funerals or forgoing them entirely because of social distancing measures has denied us the opportunity to fully celebrate the lives of the deceased. Our ability to publicly grieve together, and to adequately honor and celebrate the lost has been largely denied due to this isolating and frightening disease.

Many Americans will also remember another isolating and frightening disease: the AIDS epidemic. Ryan White, a brave and remarkable Hoosier, faced isolation and many frightening obstacles because of his AIDS diagnosis. However, Ryan's courage, bravery, and advocacy for AIDS research galvanized many in support of AIDS treatment, research and recognition of this disease's horrific impact. Since no official commemoration existed, concerned Americans decided to celebrate and honor the lives of those who died from AIDS—often isolated and alone—by creating a memorial quilt. As a result, in 1987, the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt was displayed and stretched the length of the National Mall. This remarkable quilt allowed us to honor and celebrate the lives of those tragically lost to a frightening disease, which at that time, had no cure, vaccine or effective treatment. More than 105,000 individual lives are commemorated through this quilt's 50,000 individual panels that contain photographs, correspondence, and news clippings to remember those who died from AIDS. In these panels, the memory of the victims were able to live on in public view.

Inspired by the brave advocacy and powerful legacy of the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt, I am proud to introduce the COVID-

19 Memorial Quilt Act of 2021. This legislation honors and celebrates the lives of those we have lost to the COVID-19 pandemic through the creation of a memorial quilt. Like the AIDS quilt, creating a memorial quilt to remember the lives lost due to COVID-19 will allow Americans to publicly grieve our lost loved ones, but also commemorate their lives in permanent, visible, and dignified way.

The COVID-19 Memorial Quilt Act of 2021 authorizes the design, creation, and display of a memorial quilt and other commemorative programming and exhibits to honor the victims of the COVID-19 pandemic. My legislation does this by creating a Congressional Advisory Panel which will submit plans to the Smithsonian Institution and the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress for how the quilt should be developed and displayed. Once complete, this memorial quilt will be displayed on the United States Capitol Grounds with a subsequent display on the National Mall and other locations, continuing the legacy of the AIDS quilt. This legislation also supports the powerful creativity of artists around the country by providing them with grants from the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) to help design and prepare panels for the memorial quilt.

All Americans have been affected by COVID-19. All have felt the disruption wrought by this pandemic to our families, our workplaces, our businesses, our places of worship, and our social lives. But that is nothing compared to the Americans who have not only faced disruptions, but also the wrenching loss of loved ones from this disease. Because of social distancing and protective restrictions, we have been denied the ability to adequately honor, commemorate, and publicly celebrate those we have lost. And unfortunately, as more Americans continue to die in isolation from this disease, this deficit in our collective grief will only grow. As a result, my legislation builds on the powerful legacy of the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt and will help our country to collectively grieve and appropriately honor the victims of COVID-19.

Madam Speaker, I hope my colleagues will join us in supporting the COVID-19 Memorial Quilt Act of 2021, and I urge the House to support this legislation.

HONORING TRISH BERGREN AS IOWAN OF THE WEEK

HON. CYNTHIA AXNE

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 7, 2021

Mrs. AXNE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Trish Bergren of Clarinda, Iowa as Iowan of the Week. Trish is a respected leader in the Clarinda and Page County community who has touched countless lives through her work as the Executive Director of the Clarinda Carnegie Art Museum and as the curator for the Nodaway Valley Historical Museum. Trish has a deep love, and passion for preserving the history of her community and being a guardian of the knowledge of the past for future generations.

Trish's family is no stranger to Page County and has family roots in the area that go back more than 160 years. This deep-seated passion for local history and helping young people

engage in this history drove her to a career she loves and even a book that covers the subject. Despite having moved away from the area for a time, she made the decision to return and couldn't imagine being anywhere else. Her love for the community she works is truly heartwarming to hear. Those who work with her claim she has both improved their lives and changed their outlook for the future for the better.

As part of her duties with the Historical Museum, Trish formed the Adopt-A-Grave program in 2013. The program, under the Historical Society, has worked to clean, find lost headstones, and rehab more than 750 headstones across the 50 pioneer cemeteries in Page County. This undertaking has a group of students at Clarinda High School who manage the program, while more than 39 students and 12 adults have assisted with various projects. This is just one tangible initiative run by Trish to give dignity to the history of those who came before us and ensure the pride the community holds in honoring the past.

In addition to her already busy service to the community, Trish serves on the Clarinda School Board, where she was elected in 2019 as a new member.

In consideration of the dedication to serving the community, Trish is a pillar of the community in not only Clarinda but the State of Iowa. Her reputation as a kind and selfless person precedes her and her work speaks for itself. Clarinda is a strong community because of the individuals, like Trish, who make it such a wonderful place. The work Trish has performed, and that which she has inspired others to take upon themselves will ensure that the history of the community will endure. Stemming from this dedication to serve the community and preserve the story of its past for future Iowans to learn from and enjoy, I am proud to recognize Trish Bergren as Iowan of the week.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF MEMBERS OF THE SIKH COMMUNITY AND ALL THOSE AFFECTED BY THE FEDEX SHOOTING IN INDIANAPOLIS

HON. VICTORIA SPARTZ

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 7, 2021

Mrs. SPARTZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor eight Hoosier lives lost at the FedEx facility in Indianapolis. I joined my fellow Indiana delegation members in leading our colleagues in a moment of silence on the house floor in their honor on April 21, 2021.

Of the eight lives lost, four of those individuals belonged to the Sikh community in central Indiana. This community is small and tight knit. They are friends and colleagues who work together and worship together. The loss this community is feeling in the wake of this tragedy is unimaginable. I stand with the Sikh community and all those affected by this senseless act of violence.

My deepest condolences are with all the families and friends who are experiencing unimaginable pain and loss. Our state and Nation mourn with them.